

P-10: Sexual Minority Groups and Tobacco in Washington

Venue: Statewide

Goal: Reducing Health Disparities

Sponsoring Organizations: Various

Abstract: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) populations have been identified as having a high prevalence of tobacco use in national literature. A recent review of the limited published studies to describe tobacco use in GLBT populations found that smoking appeared to be higher among adolescent and adult GLBT than in the general population. This group may be difficult to engage, due to targeted promotions by the tobacco industry, and cultural acceptance of tobacco use among GLBT members. One local organization in Washington began working with GLBT by identifying existing resources and opportunities, and creating partnerships and establishing themselves as a resource for health information. Another local organization, which had been working with an established collaborative group to serve GLBT populations, continues to identify effective, hip messaging to reach 20-30 year olds with information about quitting tobacco. Although distribution of quit kits would not be a recommended approach for universal populations, it may be an effective outreach tool within this targeted population, particularly when tailored to their special interests and utilizing volunteers and contributions.

Recommendations: DOH should follow recommendations made by the Cross-Cultural Workgroup on Tobacco, as part of a Strategic Plan for Reducing Disparities. Continued engagement of GLBT community leaders will lead to improved tobacco control capacity and culturally competent program delivery among GLBT communities in Washington. Make sure to create partnerships with the GLBT community – do not just create something in the office. Get “peer review” from GLBT partners. Look for existing events, and groups/clubs/businesses that have existing ties with the GLBT community. No shaming messages about dying from AIDS. Use existing resources (contact those who have done this before). GLBT-specific materials available from the Tobacco Education Clearinghouse of California and in Washington. It will take more work to serve rural communities where there may not be ongoing events or general acceptance of the GLBT population. Messages for Gay/Bisexual Men, Lesbian/Bisexual Women, and Transgender people need to be tailored specifically to these groups (not “sexual minority”).

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